EXCISE

(597)

E
6-1

ETHERIDGE CAROLYN E 02/09/82 140848 PRINTER: LI
OC SEOUL 4180

CONFIDENTIAL

ACTION EA-12
INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 071 W

------------------247458 0722062 /68

R 2623232 APR 82
FM AMEMBASSY SECUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5372
C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 04180
E.O. 12065: GDS 4/3/86 (CLARK, WILLIAM) OR-P
TAGS: PINT, KS
SUBJECT: REACTION TO KIM DAE JUNG SPEECH AT YWCA
REF: SEOUL 3221

1. (C) ENTIRE TEXT.

2. KIM DAE JUNG'S SPEECH AT YWCA IN SEOUL ON MARCH 28 (REFTEL) RECEIVED GENERALLY FAVORABLE REACTION BUT SOME OF HIS REMARKS ON THE RELIGIOUS NATURE OF HIS POLITICAL MISSION RAISED A FEW EYEBROWS. KIM'S SUPPORTERS WERE DELIGHTED WITH HIS PERFORMANCE. THEY FOUND THAT EXILE, PRISON AND HOUSE ARREST HAD NOT DEPRIVED THEIR MAN OF HIS WELL-DESERVED REPUTATION AS ONE OF KOREA'S MOST EFFECTIVE SPEAKERS. ON THE SUBSTANTIVE SIDE, KIM WAS ABLE TO PRESENT A STRONG INDICTMENT OF THE PREVIOUS REGIME TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF OTHER POTENTIAL CONTENDERS WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN IT AND TO ADDRESS ISSUES SUCH S THE CONTINUED NEED FOR THE ROK TO STAY ON GUARD AGAINST THE DPRK AND THE NEED FOR THE MILITARY TO STAND ASIDE FROM POLITICS. YET, KIM DID NOT CROSS THE LINE BETWEEN MOVING HIS AUDIENCE AND RABBLE ROUSING.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, A PASSAGE IN HIS SPEECH IN WHICH

CONFIDENTIAL

HE REFERRED TO HIMSELF AS A YOUNGER BROTHER OF JESUS CHRIST ("SINCE I AM A CHILD OF GOD") AND ANOTHER IN WHICH HE IMPLIED THAT HIS CANDIDACY WOULD BE DECIDED BY THE WILL OF GOD ("IF GOD BIDS ME TO RUN IN THE ELECTION, I WILL DO SO EVEN IF ALL THE PEOPLE OPPOSE. BUT IF GOD BIDS ME NOT TO RUN, I WILL NOT DO SO EVEN IF ALL THE PEOPLE SUPPORT ME") WILL ATTRACT CRITICISM. SOME OBJECTED TO THE INJECTION OF RELIGION INTO POLITICS WHICH THEY BELIEVED WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL FOR THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF KOREA. OTHERS DOUBTED THE WISDOM OF THE CANDIDATE'S OVERTLY IDENTIFYING WITH CHRISTIANITY. SOME KOREAN CHURCHMEN AND FOREIGN MISSIONARIES FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO KIM AGREED THAT IT MAY HAVE BEEN THEOLOGICALLY CORRECT FOR KIM TO DESCRIBE HIMSELF AS A YOUNGER BROTHER OF CHRIST SINCE WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD. BUT THEY WONDERED HOW THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN A NON-CHRISTIAN COUNTRY WOULD REACT

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY H. Teyda DATE 8/9/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

EXCISE

ETHERIDGE CAROLYN L 02/09.82 140949 PRINTER: LI
SO SEOUL 4186

CONFIDENTIAL

TO SUCH ASSERTIONS BY A PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANT. SOME PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY, WHO WERE FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO KIM'S CANDIDACY, WERE DISTURBED BY MESSIANIC WAY IN WHICH KIM DESCRIBED HIS POLITICAL MISSION. KIM'S REMARKS ENGENDERED SOME JOKES BY OTHER POLITICIANS AT HIS EXPENSE, BUT SO FAR ONLY LEE CHUL SEUNG COMPLAINED PUBLICLY ABOUT "THE EXPLOITATION OF RELIGION FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES".

GLEYSTEEN
CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL
PAGE 03 SEOUL 04186 0623462
CONFIDENTIAL